

Press Release

JUNE 16, 2005

**SCHAKOWSKY JOINS MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO INTRODUCE BI-PARTISAN
LEGISLATION TO BAN DRILLING IN THE GREAT LAKES**

TEMPORARY BAN ON GREAT LAKES DRILLING SET TO EXPIRE IN 2007

WASHINGTON, DC -- U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Chief Deputy Whip and member of the House Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials, joined Representative Bart Stupak (D-MI) and a bi-partisan coalition of Members of Congress at a press conference today to introduce a bill to prevent new oil and gas drilling in the Great Lakes. Without Congressional renewal, the temporary ban on drilling in the Great Lakes is set to expire in 2007.

The full text of Representative Schakowsky's remarks is below, as prepared for delivery:

"Four years ago, Congress enacted a ban on drilling in the Great Lakes. We've extended that ban, but it's still only temporary. New drilling in the Great Lakes is a real threat that could occur before the Bush Administration's term expires."

"The Great Lakes contain over 95% of the United States' freshwater and over 20% of the world's freshwater. An oil spill could have a severe effect on the 45 million people who call the Great Lakes region home. There are already an average of 135 oil spills per year in the U.S. Great Lakes. If new drilling is allowed near the shorelines, the number and volume of spills could significantly increase."

"Some states, like Illinois, have banned drilling in the Great Lakes. Others have not. Oil spills and pollution know no borders. The only way to protect residents in Illinois or any Great Lakes state is to pass a federal ban on drilling."

"Chicagoans know something about beach closings. The Lake Michigan beachfront is closed far too often because of pollution. Adding oil spills and gas leaks to our troubles is too high of a risk to take for too little fuel."

"The President and his allies in Congress have relied on an antiquated energy policy that uses fossil fuels and outdated technology to produce the nation's power supply. Similar to drilling in the Alaskan National Wildlife Refuge, extracting the small amount of oil and gas near the shorelines of our Great Lakes would power the U.S. only for days, not years. Compromising our nation's most important water supply to obtain several days worth of fuel is a short-sighted strategy that could have a disastrous effect on the health and well-being of millions of Americans."

"The U.S. should tap into renewable energy sources as part of any long-term solution to an energy shortage. Solar, wind, hydrogen, and fuel cell technology can lead America to a future of energy independence, a future where we don't have to rely on the Middle East for oil and can produce power without significant pollution."

"As the late Senator from Illinois, Paul Simon, wrote in his book, *Tapped Out*, water may replace oil as the most valuable resource on Earth. The Great Lakes are one of the most precious resources in America. Oil and water don't mix, and there's no reason to endanger America's most important water supply by allowing drilling in the Great Lakes."